

Sabina Alkire, University of Oxford

Peter Schaber, University of Zurich

Barbara Bleisch, University of Zurich

Wednesday 23rd February 2011, 14:00 – 16:30

SDC, Freiburgstrasse 130, Bern (Room A2023)

Ethics and Development Or: What do we owe the global poor?

Why care about poverty and global challenges outside our borders? Are we responsible at all for helping poor countries and people? And, if yes, how is our international engagement in favour of the poor and unprivileged to be ethically justified? The answers to these and similar questions are not only relevant to the International Cooperation as such, but also serve as a communication rationale or narrative for the Swiss development and humanitarian efforts with the objective to reduce poverty and suffering throughout the world.

This edition of the TRAVERSE marks the beginning of a series of events to support the discussion around the production of the Swiss Development Bill 2013-2016 currently taking place. This first edition will tackle the overriding question of how to underpin the International Cooperation of Switzerland in ethical terms.

Is the justification of international aid mainly based on solidarity of the privileged with the less well off of this world? Are highly developed societies such as Switzerland part of the problem of stagnating development and conflicts in poor countries? Is, what is called Aid, merely compensation? What is meant by that fashionable word “enlightened self-interest” of industrialised countries? Do we just provide Aid because an impoverished third of the world could cause trouble to us or damage our successful business activities around the globe? Any answer to such moral questions will provoke others to emerge.

Our three invited guest speakers and panellists will address these and other topics around the ethical justification of modern day International Cooperation. We will also look into different dimensions of poverty such as material deprivation, insecurity, lack of access to education, basic services as well as political and civil rights, social exclusion, absence of capabilities and options. Each dimension may ask for a different justification for support from the richer world.

Dr. Barbara Bleisch, will present and challenge common ethical perspectives of development actors with regard to the issue of what we owe the global poor.

Prof. Peter Schaber will respond to the question of how the right to subsistence can be understood and how it can be linked to human dignity, as it is mentioned in the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

Dr. Sabina Alkire, Director of the Oxford Poverty & Human Development Initiative (OPHI), will refer to ethical challenges in the context of her work on the measurement of multidimensional poverty, freedoms and human development.

The discussion will be moderated by **Michael Gerber**, SDC Analysis and Policy Division. We are looking forward to a lively debate!

Registration by 18th February 2011 at traverse@deza.admin.ch

(Free of charge, limited number of participants.)

For further information: www.deza.admin.ch/traverse